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PARTY SECRETARY'S REPORT ON AGRICULTURE IN BELORUSSIAN SSR

Sovetskaya Belorussiya
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On General Successes and Failures of Agriculture in the Republic

Collectivization has been completed in the western oblasts of the republic.

In 1954, mechanization of field operations was completed as follows: plowing of summer fallow, 99.7 percent; plowing of winter fallow, 90 percent; sowing of winter grain crops, 73.5 percent; harvesting by combine, 35.3 percent.

There are now 2.5 times as many tractors and almost 5 times as many combines in the republic as before the war, and MTS are performing 3.5 times as much work in kolkhozes as before the war. The indivisible funds of kolkhozes not total 1,405,000,000 rubles as compared with 740 million in 1940.

Collectivized animal husbandry in the eastern regions of the republic has been restored to its prewar level in all categories of livestock except cows, and more meat, milk, and eggs are being delivered to the state than during the prewar period.

There are now 1,288,800 kolkhoz households in the republic, but the number of livestock privately owned by kolkhoz workers has declined since 1950, at which time 1,360,800 head of cattle were privately owned; in 1951, the number was 1,318,400, a decrease of 42,000. By 1952, the number of cattle privately owned sank to 1,279,900, a further decrease of 40,000.

Only 82 percent of kolkhoz households own cows. The situation is even worse with regard to sheep and hog raising. Each 100 kolkhoz household which owned 99 head of cattle on 1 January 1953, owned only 37 sheep and 61 hogs.

In 1949, collectivized herds contained 12.9 cows per 100 head of cattle; in 1950, the percentage of cows rose to 18.6; in 1951, it was 23.3; in 1952, 26.2; and on 1 October 1953, the number of cows per 100 head of cattle reached 28.7.

The combined herds of kolkhozes and kolkhoz households in the republic contain 16 cows per 100 hectares of plowed land, meadows and pastures; of these, 4 cows belong to the collectivized sector and produce very low milk yields.

Hog raising in the Belorussian SSR has been criticized, especially with respect to the fattening of hogs, for it required 100 hectares of arable land to fatten less than one hog in 1952.

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On the Present State and Measures for the Further Development of Collectivized Animal Husbandry

Kolkhozes of the republic have constantly expanded collectivized animal husbandry so that it now exceeds the levels attained in the prewar period.

A comparison of the number of head of livestock for the republic as a whole in 1940 and in October 1953, follows:

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1953</u>
Cattle	765,500	1,221,100
Cows (included above)	281,500	350,900
Sheep and goats	509,300	1,069,100
Hogs	261,800	776,400

Taking into account all sectors of the agricultural economy of the republic, the following comparisons are made in the number of head of livestock in the republic as a whole:

	<u>1 Jan 1941</u>	<u>1 Jan 1953</u>	<u>Percent of 1941</u>	<u>1 Oct 1953</u>	<u>Percent of 1941</u>
Cattle	2,843,600	2,748,000	96.6	2,918,000	102.6
Cows (included above)	1,956,100	1,446,700	74.0	1,582,400	80.9
Hogs	2,520,400	1,487,100	59.0	2,820,400	111.9
Sheep and goats	2,577,900	1,591,000	61.7	1,956,700	75.8

The low level of development in the collectivized sector of animal husbandry in the republic is indicated by the distribution of cattle throughout the republic. There is an average of 13 head of cattle for every 100 hectares of assessable land, while in Baranovichskaya, Vitebskaya, and Molodechnenskaya oblasts there are only ten head. The number of head of cows and sheep for 100 hectares of assessable land is 4.0 and 11.4 respectively.

Figures for 1 October 1953 reveal that kolkhozes of the republic fulfilled the livestock plan in only one category, hog raising. Instead of the 740,000 hogs stipulated, the number attained was 776,400, a plan fulfillment of 104.9 percent. Other data for the same period is as follows: the cattle plan, calling for 1,350,000 head, was fulfilled 90.4 percent, with 1,221,100 head (including 350,900 cows instead of 430,000), or a plan fulfillment of 81.6 percent; the plan for sheep and goats called for 1,200,000 head but was fulfilled 89.1 percent, or 1,069,100 head; the poultry plan, calling for 1,200,000 head of mature poultry was fulfilled 92.4 percent, with 1,108,400 head.

Vitebskaya and Polotskaya oblasts fulfilled their cattle plans 77.3 percent and 81.6 percent, respectively.

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Percentage decreases in the size of cattle herds were reported for the following oblasts: Mogilevskaya, 12.7; Gomel'skaya, 14.4; Polotskaya, 13.9; Minskaya, 7.7; Poleskaya, 1.9; and Vitebskaya, 23.4. The size of cattle herds increased in Baranovichskaya, Brestskaya, Grodnenskaya, Molodechninskaya, and Pinskaya oblasts.

The number of cows increased by only 50,700 head in 1953, while previous increases in the number of collectivized cows amounted to: 53,300 in 1952; 77,800 in 1951; and 88,900 in 1950.

Kolkhozes of the republic in 1953 stocked their herds with only 51.1 percent of the number of cows stipulated by the plan. For the past 9 months, cattle were distributed in the following manner by kolkhozes of the Belorussian SSR: 37.8 percent were delivered to the state as meat; cooperatives received 3.9 percent; 5.9 percent were sold on the market and to kolkhoz workers; 0.4 percent were paid to kolkhoz workers as supplementary wages, 18.5 percent were slaughtered; and 33.5 percent perished. Similar figures could be shown for poultry, hog raising, and other divisions of animal husbandry.

Cattle plague was most prevalent in Vitebskaya, Mogilevskaya, and Gomel'skaya oblasts. In certain other categories of livestock, Minskaya, Polotskaya, and Poleskaya oblasts suffered most.

It is fruitless to consider developing collectivized animal husbandry in the face of the low animal birth rates prevailing in the republic. For every 100 cows only 59 calves are dropped and almost 50 percent of all cows fail to produce offspring. Birth rates of only 737 pigs per 100 sows and 95 lambs per 100 sheep are detrimental to the development of animal husbandry.

Kolkhozes must increase the proportion of cows comprising cattle herds of the republic. As of 1 October 1953, collectivized herds contained only 28.7 cows per 100 head of cattle; in Poleskaya Oblast, the figure was 23.4, the lowest in the republic. Collectivized herds in the prewar period contained 36.8 cows per 100 head of cattle.

The fodder base is the main problem in the matter of developing animal husbandry and increasing livestock productivity.

To maintain the 350,000 collectivized cows on hand should call for an ensilage-storage plan of at least 1,500,000-2,000,000 metric tons, so as to assure a supply of 5-6 metric tons per cow. The 1953 plan calls for 1,100,000 metric tons. Even if this plan is fulfilled, no more than 3 metric tons of ensilage will be available per cow, or one half of the necessary quantity. Actually, the plan has not yet been fulfilled in most oblasts.

Quality of the fodder procured is a serious problem. Everything that can be found is stored as ensilage in the republic, including large quantities of marsh grass, often the second cutting. It can hardly be said that such ensilage has great value.

For higher quality ensilage, maize, sunflowers, fodder cabbage, and several other crops should be grown on greater areas. It is necessary that 50,000-60,000 hectares of maize be planted and that a yield of not less than 500 metric quintals per hectare be obtained, which would make it possible to store 2,000,000-2,500,000 metric tons of maize ensilage.

It is necessary to increase the area devoted to fodder root crops to at least 50,000 hectares, with every kolkhoz planting 10-30 hectares of these crops, depending on its needs.

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On Increasing Production of Potatoes and Vegetables

At present, potatoes occupy 16.9 percent of the sown area in the republic, but the prewar level has not yet been reattained. For all sectors, the Belorussian SSR had 928,000 hectares of potato area before the war but has only 869,000 hectares at present, 60,000 less hectares than before the war.

In 1952, the average yield per hectare planted was only 53.3 metric quintals. With such a low yield, the gross harvest was inadequate for many kolkhozes to distribute potatoes in payment for workdays. In 1952, on the average for the republic, only one kilogram was distributed for each workday. This was, not enough to assure accumulation of seed potatoes for planting in 1953.

To achieve good results in 1954, it is necessary for each kolkhoz to accumulate 2.5-3.0 metric tons of seed potatoes for each hectare to be planted.

A total of 2,500 hectares of potatoes were planted in the republic by the check-row method in 1951 and 25,700 hectares in 1952; in 1953, the plan called for the planting of 95,000 hectares by this method but only about 75,000 hectares were so planted. The fact that no machines for check-row planting of potatoes were available caused many supervisory workers to consider this method a foolish innovation. But the great advantage of the method is that it permits full mechanization of cultivation work, and in particular, the cultivation of potatoes in two directions.

The new SKG-4 potato-planting machine, a four-row planter, is to be produced in mass numbers; but it is unknown at the present time how many will be available in the republic for the 1954 spring planting season. Nevertheless, it is necessary that all planting in 1954 be performed by the check-row method. Since the shortage of new machines will be great, it will be necessary for kolkhozes and MTS to use plows and cultivators to effect check-row planting, as they have done in previous years.

The check-row method of planting vegetables has been used in kolkhozes and sovkhoses of the republic since 1950.

In the republic as a whole, vegetable growing in kolkhozes has been conducted very badly, and yields have been very low. In 1952, the average yield of vegetables in the republic was only 54.8 metric quintals per hectare.

By spring 1954, it is necessary to produce 70,000 hotbed frames and 4,000 square meters of hothouses. On this question, the Central Committee of the Communist Party Belorussian SSR and the Council of Ministers Belorussian SSR have adopted a special decree.

On Raising the Yield of Grain and Industrial Crops

The grain problem has been solved successfully in the USSR. The country is assured of a grain supply.

In the Belorussian SSR grain growing is still in a neglected state as a result of the war, although considerable work has been done to restore it to its prewar level. In 1953, 3,472,000 hectares were sown to grain crops, as in prewar times, but the necessary yield has not yet been reached. Yields are especially low in Vitebskaya, Mogilevskaya, Polotskaya, Gomel'skaya, and Minskaya oblasts.

In the republic, there are 14,894 tractor-drawn grain seeders in MTS and 4,827 horse-drawn seeders in kolkhozes.

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In 1952, 29 million metric tons of manure and peat were hauled on the fields as compared with 18 million metric tons in 1951, 13 million in 1950, 12 million in 1949, and 8 million in 1948.

The 29 million metric tons applied in 1952 amounted to only 6.8 metric tons per hectare of sown area. Since it is said that it is necessary to apply up to 40 metric tons of local fertilizer per hectare, the amount applied was very little, and, since the 6.8 metric-ton figure is an average figure and leading kolkhozes apply 30-40 metric tons of manure and peat per hectare, much land received no fertilizer at all.

The 594 kolkhozes of Vitebskaya Oblast applied a total of 128,500 metric tons of peat to their fields in 1953; this figure was equaled by four leading kolkhozes in other oblasts.

Flax and hemp are two of the most important industrial crops grown in the republic. In 1953, the flax crop was satisfactory in most kolkhozes and good in many.

It was pointed out at the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU that the total area devoted to flax in the republic in 1953 was only 70 percent of the total prewar area. This was a result of grave errors permitted in 1952. In the postwar years, the area sown to flax in kolkhozes of the republic increased steadily: 215,000 hectares were sown in 1949, 257,000 hectares in 1950, 265,000 hectares in 1951, and 231,700 hectares in 1952. Thus, the prewar area had actually been sown [in 1952?] However, the party organization did not succeed in coping with the difficult meteorological conditions which prevailed during the fall of 1952 and failed to assure the timely harvesting of flax under those conditions, with the result that there was almost no seed for sowing the following spring. Consequently, the area sown to flax fell from 231,700 hectares in 1952 to 140,900 hectares in 1953.

In 1954 and 1955, it is necessary to regain the lost area and even to surpass the 1951 area. In this respect, it is necessary to exert special effort in kolkhozes of Mogilevskaya Oblast, where the area decreased from 49,000 hectares in 1950 to only 22,000 in 1953, and in kolkhozes of Vitebskaya Oblast, where the area declined from 55,000 hectares in 1950 to 25,000 hectares in 1953.

The republic can considerably expand the area devoted to hemp by using for this purpose peat-bog land freed as a result of reduced sowing of kok-sagyz. In 1953, a total of 18,600 hectares of hemp was sown; by 1955, it is possible and necessary to increase the area to 60,000-80,000 hectares.

It is also necessary to expand the area devoted to sugar beets and to increase the yield of this crop. In 1953, 13,300 hectares were sown to sugar beets in Grodnenskaya and Baranovichskaya oblasts, but, because of low yield, the single sugar plant in the Belorussian SSR did not receive an adequate supply of raw material.

On Further Improvement in the Operation of MTS

In the republic, there are 338 MTS, 18 MMS (mechanized land improvement stations) and LMS (meadow improvement stations), and 200 mechanized land improvement brigades attached to MTS. The Belorussian SSR now has almost 2.5 times as many tractors and 5 times as many combines as in 1940. Other machines are numbered by the thousands. In 1953, MTS are fulfilling a tractor-work plan of 11,200,000 hectares (in terms of conventional plowing) as compared with 3,180,000 hectares in 1940.

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In the Belorussian SSR, special attention must be paid to mechanizing potato and vegetable production. Strictly speaking, little has so far been done in that respect.

The composition of the MTS tractor park has changed from 75 percent wheeled and 25 percent caterpillar tractors before the war to about 70 percent caterpillar and about 30 percent wheeled tractors at present.

The Belorussian SSR is among those republics and oblasts in which utilization of the tractor park is poor. According to data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Belorussian SSR for 1952, the time during which tractors stood idle totaled 2,495,000 tractor shifts, or 51 percent of the aggregate operational time; the percentage was 56 in Vitebskaya Oblast, 61 in Minskaya Oblast, and 65 in Mogilevskaya Oblast. The average daily output per 15-horsepower tractor was only 1.8 hectares as compared with a norm of 7 hectares.

Little has been done in the republic to mechanize labor-consuming processes in animal husbandry. MTS rarely participate in this branch of agriculture. Water supply has been mechanized on only 311 livestock farms, automatic watering of cattle is practiced on only 140, and milking is performed electrically on only 27.

In MTS of the Belorussian SSR, the cadre situation is unsatisfactory. In 1951, 12,900 tractor drivers or 40.7 percent of the total number left MTS; in 1952, 8,559 tractor drivers or 28.1 percent of the total number left. As a result of such a high turnover, in most MTS there was a shortage of drivers during the pressing field-work season and tractors were in operation only one shift per day. When the 1953 spring field work began, there was a shortage in MTS of 2,300 drivers for caterpillar tractors, 530 drivers for wheeled tractors, and 131 tractor-brigade leaders. The September 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU decreed that such mechanical cadres who had left the MTS be returned. According to data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Belorussian SSR, 835 tractor drivers and 47 combine operators are already back and at work in MTS of the republic.

Qualifications of supervisory cadres leave much to be desired. Of 388 MTS directors in the republic, only 72 have higher engineering or agronomic education, 201 have secondary technical or agronomic education, 20 have secondary general education, and 92 have only 4th-7th-class elementary education. Of the chief engineers in MTS, 67 or 17 percent of the total have higher technical education, 102 have secondary education, and 217 or 56 percent of the total have only elementary education. Only 103 of the chief agronomists of MTS have higher education. Of the 239 repair-shop chiefs, 4 have higher education, 29 have secondary education, and 206 have only elementary education.

To raise the level of supervision in agriculture, industrial specialists are being sent to MTS. So far, 102 industrial engineers and mechanics have been sent to MTS to serve as directors, 156 as chief engineers, 207 as repair-shop chiefs, and 162 as mechanics. A total of 335 engineers and 292 mechanics are now at work in MTS of the republic.

Repair and storage facilities for agricultural machinery are entirely inadequate. The Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Belorussian SSR has at its disposal only 30 percent of the necessary repair plants and interrayon repair shops. Of 391 MTS and LMS, only 43 have standard repair shops, 184 have repair shops housed in buildings unsuited for the purpose, and 57 have no repair shops at all. Therefore, construction of 240 repair shops is imperative.

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Almost all machinery stands in the open. Only 10 percent of the MTS are fully equipped with sheds and garages, and 82 MTS do not have a single shed or garage. The 1953 MTS capital-construction plan calls for 26 million rubles' worth of construction; in 1954, almost 6 times as many rubles are to be invested in capital construction.

On the Work of Agricultural Organs and on Strengthening Kolkhozes Through Agronomic and Zootechnical Aid

In the system of the Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Belorussian SSR, there are at work 9,377 agricultural specialists with higher or secondary education (including 3,867 agronomists). In MTS and kolkhozes, there are at work 1,878 agronomists, or about half of the total number; the rest are found in the apparatuses of the ministry and of the oblast and rayon administrations. Ninety-six agronomists and zootechnicians are at work on the staff of the ministry, 321 in the apparatuses of the oblast administrations, and 1,264 in the apparatuses of the rayon administrations.

The September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU established a new principle on the question of utilizing specialists: most of them are to be concentrated in MTS and assigned to serve kolkhozes. All of those in rayon administrations of agriculture and procurement of the republic, 20 percent of those in oblast administrations of agriculture and procurement of the republic, and 25 percent of those on the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Belorussian SSR are to be transferred to MTS.

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